

## Labelling of hazardous chemicals in the workplace

The Australian Government is making changes to classification and labelling regulations for hazardous chemicals in the work place. At present, chemicals are classified and labelled under the National OHS Commission (NOHSC) National Standards. The proposed changes will align with the international standard, the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. This standard is a single internationally agreed system of chemical classification and hazard communication through labelling and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). The GHS is published by the United Nations and includes harmonised criteria for the classification of:

- ▼ Physical hazards
- ▼ Health hazards
- ▼ Environmental hazards

Importers and manufacturers of chemicals may continue to use the existing NOHSC labelling system for hazardous chemicals up until 31 December 2016. From 1 January 2017, the GHS classification standard shall apply to all hazardous chemicals in the work place. Chemical manufacturers and suppliers are also required to comply with the GHS standard from 1 January 2017, providing correct classification and labelling to all packaging on chemicals. The existing Australian Dangerous Goods code in relation to the transport of dangerous goods by road or rail will remain unchanged and in-force, therefore existing classification and labelling rules will apply for transportation.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) regulations also require person/s conducting a business or undertaking to ensure correct labelling is provided to all hazardous chemicals.

Therefore, in addition to importers, manufacturers and suppliers, businesses that store and handle such chemicals are also bound by the new GHS standard, effective from 1 January 2017.

### GHS hazard class pictograms



**Explosive**    **Flammability**    **Oxidising**    **Chronic health hazard**    **Environment hazard**



**Gases under pressure**    **Corrosive**    **Acute toxicity**    **Certain health hazard**

The GHS system of chemical classification and hazard communication on labels and Safety Data Sheets is incorporated in the national model WHS Regulations (2012). WHS authorities within the respective states and territories in Australia are responsible for implementation of the changes as well as subsequent administration and compliance.

For more information on your duties and responsibilities under the WHS regulations governing hazardous chemicals in your workplace, contact the relevant Worksafe authority in your state or territory.

The [Safe Work Australia](#) website provides detailed guidance on the transition to the GHS including how to label workplace chemicals.

The [Labelling of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals Code of Practice](#) is also from Safe Work Australia:

You may also contact your chemical supplier who should ensure chemicals supplied from 1 January 2017 comply with the new labelling regulations.

For more information: Contact us at [riskengineering@vero.com.au](mailto:riskengineering@vero.com.au)